VetPALs – what is it?

• Peer assisted learning Scheme - Vet students in later years support earlier year students
• Student-led sessions for other students
• Not teaching but facilitating discussion
• Not about course content but about academic skills
• Leaders trained (2 day course at R(D)SVS)
• Leaders not paid but can work towards Edinburgh Award

Where we are now

• Core part of the Schools’ student support
• 6 new Leaders recruited annually and 4 for GEP VetPALs
• Additional activities now included beyond initial remit:
  • Making of Better You week event in Jan aimed at all years
  • Sessions run for later years at key transition points (pre-clinical/clinical, move to final year)
  • Set of student engaged in education and used for ad-hoc representation/views

Lessons Learned

• Be patient as takes time to get established and embedded.
• Trust the Leaders, support but don’t micro-manage
• Have regular meetings with the whole team (monthly) and have a few senior students that meet more frequently and act as main liaison with the Team
• Needs local academic support and small amount of funding (for catering & occasional stationary

Journey

2014-15 recruited new leaders (2 of existing Leaders stayed on); new Leaders had attended sessions as 1st years and wanted to give something back.
• Sessions at Pollock Halls & numbers attending growing
2015-16 more new Leaders to give Leaders from all of the later years
• Moved back to R(D)SVS but times chosen to suit the 1st year timetable and the Leaders timetable.
2016-17 introduced similar scheme but aimed at graduate entry programme (GEP) students run by later year GEPs
• Started with 3 GEP leaders, all sessions at R(D)SVS
• Large numbers attending from the start

Baby steps

• Started 2013-14
• 8 Leaders from 3rd and 4th year
• Aimed at First Year students to help with transition into University
• To start with sessions at R(D)SVS on Wed lunchtime but attendance low but feedback positive:-
  "They were very helpful and friendly"
• Students said would like to attend but conflict with sports so moved to Pollock Halls @ 7pm and attendance increased.

VetPALs – a journey to success
Dr Jessie Paterson & the VetPAL Leaders – contact Jessie.Paterson@ed.ac.uk